

Saratoga On the Move
Presented by Sue Malinowski, MS

Saratoga On the Move (SOM), an affiliate of America On the Move, is a grassroots effort to encourage people to move more and eat less in efforts to combat obesity and promote good health habits. During my ten-minute presentation, I will describe the genesis, foundation, activities, and resources that have contributed to the advancement of this countywide initiative in upstate New York.

Since its introduction to community leaders in July 2003, SOM has been embraced by local and state politicians, the media, healthcare providers, education leaders, and businesses. SOM has cultivated numerous partnerships with individuals and organizations to sponsor events, garner financial support, and raise community awareness of the problems associated with overweight and obesity. A partial list of these partnerships with SOM includes:

- Saratoga Hospital which contributed \$10,000 in start-up funding,
- NORDLYS, a local foundation that matched the hospital's contribution,
- The Mayor of Saratoga Springs who named SOM as his administration's health initiative,
- The Saratogian, a local newspaper that committed to a monthly SOM feature story and picture, as well as coverage of all events,
- The Saratoga County Board of Supervisors who made a proclamation that November 5, 2004 was SOM day in the county,
- The YMCA which actively serves on the SOM steering committee and promotes walking activities with their youth and senior populations,
- A New York State Assemblyman who made a \$10,000 grant to build a walking trail in a local community and sponsor a "walking health challenge" to members of that community,
- A local college that hosted a community forum to discuss potential changes to the community infrastructure such as walking paths, safety measures, school lunch programs, and media involvement in this issue.

The presentation will highlight some of the activities, events, and media coverage that have occurred since SOM's kickoff in October 2003. Special attention will be focused on the advantages of taking a local, rather than regional, state, or national approach to this effort.

The presentation will conclude with a brief overview of future plans for SOM.